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PROCEEDINGS OF THE NINTH NORTH AMERICAN CRANE WORKSHOP: Preface, Dedications, & Awards

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FRONTISPIECE. George Gee, retired US Geological Survey biologist at Patuxent National Wildlife Research Center received the L.H. WALKINSHAW CRANE CONSERVATION AWARD in honor of his decades of achievement with captive breeding flocks of cranes at Patuxent. The award was presented on 20th January 2003.

DEDICATION

This volume is dedicated to all those biologists and technicians who have contributed endless hours and efforts to gather information on cranes and who many times go unrecognized.

Cover Photo: Wintering sandhill cranes at Cosumnes River Preserve, Central Valley, California, USA.
Photo by Michael Forsberg/www.michaelforsberg.com.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE NINTH NORTH AMERICAN CRANE WORKSHOP

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- Wood, D.A., editor. 1992. Proceedings 1988 North American Crane workshop. Florida Game and Freshwater comm.. Nongame Wildl. Program Tech. Rep. 12. 305pp.
- Stahlecker, D.W. and R.P. Urbanek, editors. 1992. Proceedings of the Sixth North American Crane Workshop. North American Crane Working Group. Grand Island, NE. 179pp.
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PREFACE

These proceedings include papers presented at the Ninth North American Crane Workshop in Sacramento, California in 2003. In addition, there are a few other papers included in this volume of the proceedings that were not presented at the workshop but were appropriate to include here. I would like to thank previous editors of the proceedings Dave and Cathy Ellis and Richard Urbanek for providing advice and suggestions for dealing with the current proceedings. Others provided input and suggestions and they were all well received and appreciated. I want to thank the associate editors of this issue of the proceedings and all the reviewers who gave their time and effort to improve the quality of papers presented here. I want to especially recognize Mike Webb, who's help was invaluable in making this volume of the proceedings possible. Mike devoted considerable time and effort in the preparation of this volume.

The year 2003, when the Ninth North American Crane Workshop was conducted marked the 25th year anniversary of the incorporation of the North American Crane Working Group in the State of Nebraska. Gary, R. Lingle, Steven Balsano, Alfred Grewe, Brian Johns, Steve Nesbitt, Dale Stahlecker, and Richard Urbanek are named as the original incorporators of the working group and they also comprised the first ever Board of Directors. Some of these individuals continue to be involved with the working group and in crane research and management. As is clear from a perusal of this and previous proceedings that considerable work has been shared at workshops organized since that time, and continues to date. The work conducted has been well documented thanks to the efforts of the North American Crane Working Group and the publication of the Workshop Proceedings. I hope that this effort will continue for many years into the future and that the North American Crane Working Group continues to increase in size, membership, and importance throughout North America. To me it has been inspirational to meet and work with many of those individuals associated with the North American Crane Working Group. It would be hard to find another group of such friendly, dedicated, and devoted conservationists, researchers, and managers.

Through my interest in cranes and the interaction with members of the North American Crane Working Group I have also become committed to the mission of the NACW. As the 25th anniversary stretches to the 30th and beyond, many important members of the working group may be reaching the tenure of their participation. It is important to bring new people and younger generations into the membership of the NACW so that they may continue the mission of the NACW. Despite the considerable amount of information presented in this and previous proceedings there is much work yet to be done in better understanding cranes and attempting to protect them. Many information gaps remain still, despite all the effort and time devoted by so many dedicated crane biologists to date. Hopefully, the Proceedings of the North American Crane Workshop will continue to lead the way in documenting important information on cranes into the future for many years to come.

Felipe Chavez-Ramirez, October 2005, Wood River, Nebraska



Paul C. Currier
1952-2003

Paul C. Currier, age 50, died on the 19th of April 2003, following complications from heart surgery. At the time, he was the Executive Director of the Platte River Whooping Crane Maintenance Trust. Paul grew up in Michigan and obtained a B.S. degree in Biology from Alma College in 1974. He began conducting research on Platte valley wetlands during his post-graduate education at Iowa State University where he eventually earned M.S. (1979) and Ph.D. (1982) degrees. He became one of the original staff members of the Platte River Whooping Crane Maintenance Trust when he was hired as the wetland ecologist in 1981. Paul devoted his entire professional career to Nebraska's central Platte River valley and the wildlife that depend on it, eventually becoming the deputy director and finally (1995) the executive director of the Trust.

Paul loved gourmet food and good wine. The Halloween and Christmas parties he threw are justly famous and fondly remembered among all who attended them. Paul also loved to travel throughout the world. I will remember him most for shepherding me around the savannas of East Africa and the delight he showed at spotting some new plant or small bird while the rest of the group was looking for another lion or elephant.

No one cared more about the Platte River, its wet meadows, and providing migratory habitat for cranes than Paul. The fact that any crane roost habitat still exists on the Platte River at all is due largely to his efforts. He is deeply missed by all of his friends and colleagues.

Kent Pfeiffer
Gibbon, Nebraska



John P. Taylor
1954-2004

John P. Taylor, Jr., Senior Wildlife Biologist with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service died of a massive stroke on September 27, 2004. After a number of positions with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), he became the Refuge Biologist for Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge, NM. John was the first Senior Wildlife Biologist for a Land Management and Research Demonstration Refuge in the USFWS. He was the USFWS Employee of the Year in 2003 and recognized as a Refuge Recovery Champion in 2002. He received a Bachelor of Science and a Ph.D from New Mexico State University and a Master of Science from Texas Tech University. John published more than 30 research papers and provided numerous lectures and field demonstrations to groups ranging from professional wildlife biologists to politicians. He organized the 8th North American Arctic Goose Conference in Albuquerque, NM, in 1995 and the 8th North American Crane Workshop in Albuquerque in 2000. John was a noted wetland manager and riparian restoration specialist. His work on moist-soil wetland management for migratory waterfowl and sandhill cranes to increase the carrying capacity of degraded habitats is widely applied throughout the country. His ground-breaking work on riparian zone restoration, including assessment of overbank flooding following natural river hydrographs and stage drawdown, is being applied by restoration ecologists throughout the southwestern U.S. John's interest in wetland and waterbird conservation crossed international borders. He clearly recognized the inter-relationships between wetlands and migratory birds in the southwestern U.S. and the adjacent Mexican Interior Highlands. Fluent in Spanish, John was involved in numerous cooperative international studies and technical assistance programs with Mexican biologists and conservationists. His work ethic and professionalism were truly inspiring to countless individuals. His wife Maggie, son Pablo, and daughter Maria Elena, survives John.

*Loren Smith,
Lubbock, Texas*

SPECIAL ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

The North American Crane Working Group

Presented three lifetime achievement awards
and one special achievement award in January 2003
at the 9th North American Crane Workshop

Lifetime Achievement

To

Carol D. Littlefield

for outstanding dedication to the western flyway sandhill cranes and
contributions to our better understanding of the distribution and
ecology of that population of sandhill cranes.

To

Rod Drewien

for outstanding dedication to the whooping crane cross-fostering project
and fundamental contributions to the understanding of sandhill crane
life history in the Rocky Mountains and beyond.

To

Steve Nesbitt

For outstanding dedication to the whooping crane reintroduction efforts
in Florida and for fundamental contributions to our understanding
of Florida sandhill crane life history

Special Achievement

To

Xiomara Galvez Aguilera

For outstanding dedication to our better understanding the status,
distribution, and basic ecology of the Cuban sandhill crane